

## CHURCH LEADERSHIP MODEL

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## Church Leadership Model

Leaders play an essential role in making any organization a sustainable place and promoting its growth. Church leaders also take a crucial part in the empowerment of disciples and inspiring them to live in accordance with Christian values, including the missionary service. However, today's globalized societies pose significant difficulties that may interfere with successful missionary work and the attraction of new church members. The modern social environment is multicultural: it is comprised of both majority and minority groups, marginalized and privileged individuals who hold distinct values. It is ever-changing as well and, therefore, old-fashioned leadership and discipleship methods are not as efficient as they were before.

The present research project will explore factors defining failures and success in evangelizing present-day communities in the United States, focusing on such variables as leadership practices and methodologies utilized by ministries for community evangelization, including the creation and integration of a holistic discipleship vision into community outreach and support programs (as well as the establishment of partnerships with various community organizations). It is argued in the present thesis that these two variables - leadership and community outreach based on the holistic discipleship principles - play a crucial role in church growth.

However, effective leadership and community outreach strategies not only can induce an increase in the numbers of church members and the rate of regular attendance but also may improve the quality of relationships with congregates and disciples and strengthen a church's ties with a community where it is located. It is valid to say that in the context of ongoing society secularization and a consequent decline of churches in many advanced countries, it is essential to provide congregates and disciples with necessary resources to help them have as

many authentic spiritual experiences as possible.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, it is pivotal to keep churches organizationally strong and responsive to the general developmental trends in society. With an appropriate approach to leadership, disciple relationship building, and outreach, both of these goals will be possible to attain.

The research will be conducted in order to verify or refute the abovementioned statement through the empirical evaluation of a suggested evidence-based model to guide the ministry throughout the training and encouragement of disciples to fulfill the Great Commission and designing community support and prevention programs in [NAME OF THE COMMUNITY/CHURCH]. In the present chapter, an overview of the ministry context will be provided along with the discussion of problem and purpose statements, the researcher's basic assumptions informing their approach to investigation and collection of data, study limitations and delimitations, and, finally, a thesis statement.

### **Ministry Context**

The congregation community selected for the study is situated in [NAME OF THE COMMUNITY/CHURCH] and is highly diverse in terms of socio-demographic characteristics. The community predominantly consists of White individuals, whereas Blacks and Hispanics constitute the largest minority groups here. An insignificant percentage of community dwellers are foreign-born immigrants who mostly come from Asian and South American countries, and some of them are non-English speakers.

The congregation culture embeds traditional Christian rituals and events including baptism and worship through sermons, songs, sacraments, and so forth. Noteworthy, individual and group prayer may be considered the central spiritual practice in the church and is core to its culture. As for congregation leaders, they also perform many traditional

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<sup>1</sup> John Hayward, "Church Growth via Enthusiasts and Renewal," *ResearchGate*, July 2010, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228934751\\_Church\\_Growth\\_via\\_Enthusiasts\\_and\\_Renewal](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228934751_Church_Growth_via_Enthusiasts_and_Renewal).

practices centered on the spiritual formation of congregates, counseling, teaching, and so forth. Shepherdship may be considered the central among those practices as it is most consistent with the leadership approach implemented by the ministry: a people-oriented and God-oriented shepherd leader. It means that by using their competence and expertise on the subject, the pastors aim to guide congregates through the process of Bible reading, discussion, and embracing of the truth.

Moreover, the most common style of leadership approach implemented by the ministry in the selected community can also be described as charismatic. This leadership approach is described by Setley and Gautsch as based on personal charisma and ability to inspire followers to action by provoking an emotional response in them<sup>2</sup>. It is also valid to note that within the general Christian church context, charismatic leaders always possess, extensive knowledge of Gospels, exercise unshakable moral righteousness, and are driven by compassion. All these qualities and competencies are essential to perform such practices as stewardship and shepherding well. Although church leaders included in the study sample do not pose themselves as authoritative figures, congregates still perceive them as individuals with the expert and the referent power. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that their relationships with the ministry within the chosen congregation culture are built within the traditional leader-follower model.

Evangelization and community outreach activities are also common in the selected ministry context. For instance, church leaders regularly meet with children and teenage students to communicate with them, provide counseling, and teach Scriptures to them. Moreover, the church is dedicated to serving the vulnerable populations and, with the help of

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2. David M. Setley and Douglas Gautsch, "Leadership and the Church: The Impact of Shifting Leadership Constructs," *International Journal of Business and Social Research* 5, no. 12 (2015): 17.

volunteers, regularly distributes groceries to those in need. In this way, the ministry both participates in conventional community outreach programs that are often launched by non-religious organizations and carries out activities that help to communicate Gospel and make disciples.

### **Problem Statement**

The problem that this project will address is the failure to evangelize modern, multicultural communities successfully and attain a sustainable growth in the number of the church congregates. Nowadays, a lot of American churches are either declining or plateaued, whereas a shrink in the size of the congregation is a widespread trend. Within a period of a few decades, the number of unchurched adults in the United States has increased by 92 percent.<sup>3</sup> These data findings are in line with those provided by Easum and Tenny-Brittian who claim that less than 17 percent of the US citizens attend church regularly.<sup>4</sup> In this regard, the problem of barriers to church growth is of significant concern, and it is essential to address those issues while considering all possible social and cultural factors characterizing the present-day world.

It is valid to say that the main factor defining the size of the congregation in various communities is the overall approach utilized by ministries in order to build relationships with them. As non-profit organizations, many churches often experience “a back-door problem” which means that congregates may “go out the back door, never to return, and this typically is without discussion or notification”<sup>5</sup>. According to Setley and Gautsch, this problem is

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3. Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, *Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned around and Yours Can Too* (Nashville: B & H Pub. Group, 2007), 26.

4. William M. Easum and William Tenny-Brittian, *Effective Staffing for Vital Churches: The Essential Guide to Finding and Keeping the Right People* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2012), 11.

5. Setley and Gautsch, “Leadership and the Church,” 17.

primarily due to the utilized leadership approach that substantially shapes follower perceptions and either strengthens their motivation or discourages them to engage in church activities and culture more<sup>6</sup>. It is clear that in order to maintain long-lasting, trustful and meaningful relations with congregates and disciples, one should keep a positive leader-follower dynamic, which is possible to create by using leadership skills and qualities that go beyond expertise.

In conventional understanding, the term “leadership” means the motivational force stimulating followers to achieve shared goals and objectives and inspiring them to change their behaviors. Nevertheless, it may be suggested that in order to improve the quality of relationships between the church, disciples, and congregates, this concept must be expanded to include a view on leadership as an enabling function, which slightly deviates from the traditional leader-follower and servant leadership paradigms.<sup>7</sup> Such an approach equates leadership to mentorship which, in its turn, implies the development of a knowledge sharing system needed to empower others to act and mobilize resources. As reported by Elkington et al., “mentoring is a lifelong relationship, in which a mentor helps a protege develop his or her God-given potential”<sup>8</sup>. In other words, mentoring implies that a person with greater expertise and knowledge provide assistance to less experienced individuals who want to grow in the same field of performance.

Since this type of leadership requires mentors to invest a lot of time in relationships with mentees, it may be hard to adopt. Nevertheless, the advantages of mentoring disciples

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6. Setley and Gautsch, 17.

7. Rob Elkington et al., "Leadership as an Enabling Function: Towards a New Paradigm for Local Church Leadership in the 21st Century," *In Die Skriflig/In Luce Verbi* 49, no. 3 (2015): <https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v49i3.1911>.

8. Elkington et al., "Leadership as an Enabling Function," <https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v49i3.1911>.

can easily outweigh all implementation costs. The benefits of this training and empowerment practice include “increased support, professional friendships, networks, personal development, confidence, inspiration, contact with role models,” and other<sup>9</sup>. Clearly, such an approach to leadership can be more promising in terms of evangelizing communities since, through the provision of continual support, it can encourage disciples’ greater engagement in Christian service and missionary work, in particular.

Another factor that may interfere with the growth of churches is an obsolete vision of community outreach programs. Churches have always been essential transformational agents in society and were always involved in the design and realization of various prevention and community support programs. Traditionally, caring for poor and needy individuals was regarded as one of the core values within the body of Christian services. Moreover, distinct social-economic problems usually were approached within the context of racial and ethnic disparities. However, this strategy is no longer appropriate and may even lead to counterproductive outcomes.

For instance, research evidence obtained by Dunaetz and Priddy indicates that excessive ministry engagement in local community outreach endeavors usually does not result in greater church growth, whereas the development of a church culture based on personal and corporate prayer is associated with the better attraction of new church members<sup>10</sup>. It is possible to say that the belief that more outreach activities are needed in order to help unchurched individuals find Christ is rooted deeply in the minds of many church leaders, yet when outreach is not in line with evangelism practices, it may even

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9. Elkington et al., "Leadership as an Enabling Function," <https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v49i3.1911>.

10. David R. Dunaetz and Kenneth E. Priddy, “Pastoral Attitudes that Predict Numerical Church Growth,” *Great Commission Research Journal* 6, no. 1 (2013): 248.



interfere with church growth<sup>11</sup>. Nevertheless, outreach is essential to establish relationships with community dwellers and local organizations and, therefore, is valuable. However, it is pivotal to re-evaluate the overall approach to program development and participants if two of the church's major goals are to make disciples and to grow while serving those in need.

Overall, nowadays, in order to foster growth and cohesion, communities must be viewed as vibrant and multiculturally rich areas. Although caring for vulnerable populations is still an essential part of missionary work, in the present-day environment, churches must focus on communities in general and strive to promote their welfare. Based on this, it is valid to say that the concept of holistic discipleship fits in the new vision of community outreach programs well.

Holistic discipleship can be defined as a way through which "the ultimate God addresses intimate needs in ordinary areas of life; areas of 'non-poor' poverty are exposed; and disciple-makers consider the community growth process from relief to sustainability."<sup>12</sup> It means that not only does discipleship mean rendering services to unprivileged and marginalized social groups but covers the community in all its diversity while taking into account all possible vulnerabilities. It implies a positive social change, a pursuit of the city welfare from within the urban structures.<sup>13</sup> In addition, it primarily focuses on educational, volunteering, prevention, and support programs.<sup>14</sup> Noteworthy, the placement of the

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11. Dunaetz and Priddy, "Pastoral Attitudes that Predict Numerical Church Growth," 249.

12. Jay Moon, "Holistic Discipleship: Integrating Community Development in the Discipleship Process," *Missio Nexus*, January 1, 2012, <https://missionexus.org/holistic-discipleship-integrating-community-development-in-the-discipleship-process/>.

13. George J. Van Wyngaard, "Conceptual Considerations for Studying Churches' Engagement with Urban Fractures and Vulnerabilities," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 73, no. 3 (2017): 2.

14. National WMU, "Holistic Discipleship," *WMU*, June 9, 2016, <http://www.wmu.com/?q=article/national-wmu/national-wmu/holistic-discipleship>.

community interests and welfare in the forefront is a way to overcome the stigma of religion and a negative perception of Christianity as a counterculture. In this way, a perfect vision of a social change through discipleship can be the development of an inclusive, favorable, and spiritual community environment with the help of engaged and passionate believers and support from church leaders.

The third factor interfering with church growth is the general demographic trend in the United States. Since the modern social environment is multicultural and everchanging, churches should re-evaluate and modify their approaches to such fundamental practices as leadership and missionary work in order to meet the interests and needs of the contemporary communities and all culturally diverse individuals who dwell in them. This indicates that multicultural competence is an essential component of successful and effective ministry and missionary work.

The significance of multicultural competence in today's increasingly ethnically and demographically diverse social environment cannot be underestimated. Cultural competence is defined as the sensitivity towards multicultural peculiarities in diverse individuals, the awareness of general multicultural differences, and the ability to interact with people from diverse backgrounds effectively<sup>15</sup>. Since cultural competence directly affects the quality of relationship building, it can be advised to church leaders to undergo cross-cultural training because it has a purpose to increase the effectiveness of interactions with people from diverse backgrounds through the acknowledgment of disparities in values, views, and attitudes that often induce cross-cultural uncertainty and conflicts.<sup>16</sup>

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15. Chi-Yue Chiu et al., "Cross-Cultural Competence: Theory, Research, and Application," *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 44, no. 6 (2013): 843.

16. Hsiu-Ching Ko, "Cross-Cultural Leadership Effectiveness: Perspectives from Non-Western Leaders," *Management and Organizational Studies* 2, no. 4 (2015): 1.

One of the most apparent benefits of a cross-cultural approach originates from the fact that many individuals in multicultural communities do not attend church because they do not accept the way the Christian teaching is presented to them there.<sup>17</sup> It is worth noticing that the church cannot compromise its values to meet secular preferences of all social groups. Nevertheless, it still can modify its manner of communication in order to appeal to more individuals from all walks of life. The cross-cultural approach can be of great help in attaining this objective. Moreover, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (2009) states that the mission of the Christian church is inherently cross-cultural.<sup>18</sup> It is valid to say that the practice of multicultural competence can help create disciples from diverse backgrounds and inspire them to act and serve.

Lastly, it can be argued that the best way to explore communities, identify their needs and vulnerabilities, ensure sustained service, and establish trust is through partnership development and networking. It is noted that churches can benefit from networks by tapping into rich sources of information provided by their partners or by gaining access to other resources needed to attain shared missionary and community improvement goals.<sup>19,20</sup> In other

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17. Marg Perry, "How Can the Life, Ministry and Teaching of the Apostle Paul, Address the Development of Cross-Cultural Leadership Practice That Is Biblically-Based, and Informed by Relevant Secular Theory?" *Journal of Contemporary Ministry*, no. 4 (2018): 107.

18. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, "*Talking Together as Christians Cross-Culturally: A Field Guide. Revised Edition*," ELCA, 2009, 11, [http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Talking\\_Together\\_As\\_Christians\\_Cross\\_Culturally\\_A\\_Field\\_Guide.pdf](http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Talking_Together_As_Christians_Cross_Culturally_A_Field_Guide.pdf).

19. Kärin Butler Primuth, "How Networks are Shaping the Future of World Mission," *Mission Frontiers*, March 1, 2017, <http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/how-networks-are-shaping-the-future-of-world-mission>.

20. Phill Butler and Clyde Cowan, "Partnership: Accelerating World Evangelization in the 90's," *Mission Frontiers*, May 1, 1997, <http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/partnership-accelerating-world-evangelization-in-the-90s>.

words, networking decreases costs, facilitates experience development, and accelerates the fulfillment of various objectives.

With partnerships, the church's ability to address a greater variety of community vulnerabilities increases. For instance, previous research findings and experiences of some churches indicate that in collaboration with healthcare and social organizations and interprofessional specialists, it is possible to establish effective church- and community-based programs for prevention of such problems as diabetes,<sup>21</sup> substance abuse,<sup>22</sup> youth violence,<sup>23</sup> and so forth. In a similar way, by engaging disciples and organizations with different specialization, the church may attend to various emotional, educational, spiritual and other needs of local people and even provide a crisis relief response.

An obvious advantage of partnering and networking in this regard is the establishment of competence trust: people become more drawn to programs knowing that they are carried out by competent volunteers or qualified specialists.<sup>24</sup> An ultimate positive effect of church networking is the promotion of social capital through bonding and strengthening of ties among people.<sup>25</sup> It happens because such an approach allows increasing efficacy of efforts and leads to greater engagement in church on part of community residents.

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21. Tricia S. Tang et al., "Outcomes of a Church-based Diabetes Prevention Program Delivered by Peers," *The Diabetes Educator* 40, no. 2 (2014): 223.

22. Knowlton Johnson et al., "Mobilizing Church Communities to Prevent Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse," *Journal of Community Practice* 7, no. 2 (2000): 2.

23. Susan Morrel-Samuels et al., "Community Engagement in Youth Violence Prevention: Crafting Methods to Context," *The Journal of Primary Prevention* 37, no. 2 (2016): 190.

24. Joyce Hoelting, "Building Trust in Communities," *University of Minnesota Extension*, 2017, <https://extension.umn.edu/vital-connections/building-trust-communities>.

25. Wilma Gallet, "Social Connectedness: The Role of The Local Church in Building Community," *Research Gate*, 2016, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312618350\\_Social\\_connectednessthe\\_role\\_of\\_the\\_local\\_church\\_in\\_building\\_community](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312618350_Social_connectednessthe_role_of_the_local_church_in_building_community).

## Purpose Statement

Based on the problem discussed and analyzed above, it may be suggested that in order to be “a truly missional church involves deep reflection on culture and discovering creative ways of communication and church practice that both adapt to culture and challenge it.”<sup>26</sup> Thus, not only should churches aim to involve in communities more, but also develop a profound understanding of trends dominating individuals' lives within certain urban areas and use this knowledge to become closer and more helpful to them.<sup>27</sup> Considering this, the present research project will explore the way contemporary churches approach such fundamental practices as leadership and missionary work today. In addition, it will aim to thoroughly analyze the cultural and social context in which contemporary churches in the United States function and will attempt to answer the following questions:

- Which approaches do church leaders undertake to respond to present-day community trends?
- Do these methods and approaches help to meet the interests and needs of the contemporary communities and all individuals who dwell in them?
- What leadership and disciple-making models are the most promising in terms of community evangelization and church growth?
- How efficient are those leadership and community interaction models in identifying the interests and serving the needs of diverse communities and establishing trustful, lasting, and meaningful relationships with them?

The ultimate goal of the present research will be the evaluation of an evidence-based leadership model that will incorporate the vision of leadership as mentorship, holistic

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26. Timothy Keller, *Serving a Movement: Doing Balanced, Gospel-centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 30.

27. Dino Rizzo, *Serve Your City: How to Do It and Why It Matters* (Calgary: ARC Resources, 2018), 26.

discipleship, multicultural competence, and networking. As it was mentioned previously in the paper, in order to multiply disciples and carry out missionary work successfully in the present-day environment, church leaders should consider contemporary demographic and broader cultural trends and incorporate the understanding of the community in their communication practices. The leadership model comprised of the elements thoroughly described in the previous section can help the ministry in attaining those goals and, over some time, stimulating the growth of the church.

The significance and relevance of the study are due to a general decline of the Christian church in western culture. At the same time, it is worth noting that some regions, such as Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America, on the contrary, show an increased interest in Christianity. Moreover, as stated by Jenkins, not only are non-western churches are growing more rapidly than the western ones, they are frequently more successful in missionary work<sup>28</sup>. Considering this, it is pivotal to get a deeper insight into factors defining the spread of Christianity in different social and cultural contexts as it can help devise relevant and effective strategies that would help promote Christian values within the mainstream western culture. More specifically, by studying community evangelization failures in the United States and similar advanced economies, it may be possible to reveal which methodology for disciple-making and evangelization is the most applicable to their environments and find a better way to empower disciples and churches to carry out missionary work there.

It is clear that today “there is a major gap between becoming a “member” [of a church] and living a meaningful, relevant, active life as a real disciple, faithfully responding

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28. Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 87.

to the call left by the Master”<sup>29</sup>. It is observed that the main reason for this gap to exist is the dominance of secular, post-religious, and postmodern trends in the urban communities, especially in advanced economies. For instance, Gonçalves states that for a significant time in cultures based in consumerism, personal choice and individualism were of the utmost importance and all objects and ideas, including religion itself, were regarded as lifestyle accessories<sup>30</sup>. It means that people in consumerist societies may tend to experience religion superficially and lack truly meaningful ties with it. Obviously, such a trend poses significant challenges in disciple-making efforts. Nevertheless, it is also observed that amidst the widespread interest in consumption and aspiration to satisfy personal needs, a greater number of postmodern individuals start to seek real spiritual and community experiences, which is a positive postmodernist trend<sup>31</sup>.

The leadership framework developed in the present research project aims to capture and take into account as many prevalent societal and cultural trends as possible. Therefore, churches who would implement it afterwards will become able to respond to existing cultural and societal challenges more efficiently. Such components of the suggested model as mentorship, multicultural competence and holistic discipleship integrated with outreach will allow ministries to develop sustainable and trustful relationships with disciples and congregates and strengthening community ties.

### **Basic Assumptions**

The numerical growth in membership is important since it helps to ensure churches’ economic stability and viability. Nevertheless, ministries should primarily focus on disciple-making as a way for the improvement of the quality in the church-community relationships. It

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29. Kleber D. Gonçalves, “Transforming Discipleship: Opportunities in Following the Master in a Postmodern World,” *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* 12, no. 2 (2016): 278.

30. Gonçalves, “Transforming Discipleship,” 278.

31. Gonçalves, 284-286.

is worth noting that there seem to be strong links between evangelism, discipleship, and church leadership. Disciples may be regarded as change agents within the community as they spread the teaching of Christ through their deeds and words. In their turn, church leaders take an essential part in inspiring missional activities of disciples. Therefore, effective leadership can be regarded as a foundation for both disciple-making and evangelism. It is also valid to state that leaders, as individuals with the power to influence others, play a pivotal role in shifting from the obsolete views on communities and missionary work to the new and more modern ones. Thus, the present research project will be mainly centered on the responsibilities and practices implemented leaders in order to stimulate the church growth. Therefore, the intervention designed based on the analysis of various leadership concepts, theories, models, and practices will mainly target church leaders' behaviors and knowledge.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

#### Limits

Due to time constraints, the study will be limited to interviewing just about 30 individuals. It is possible to say that this sample pool will be enough to attain both informational and theoretical saturation in the given qualitative research project. In other words, it is expected that answers collected from the intended number of respondents will be sufficient to reveal consistent patterns in data sets and that a complete set of constructs that comprise the chosen theoretical framework is fully represented in those answers<sup>32</sup>. Since the depth of analysis and accuracy of research design as such are the main contributors to the quality of qualitative research rather than the size of the sample, they will be paid greater attention in order to attain an adequate of findings trustworthiness and reliability.

#### Delimitations

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32. Benjamin Saunders et al., "Saturation in Qualitative Research: Exploring Its Conceptualization and Operationalization." *Quality & Quantity* 52, no. 4 (2017): 1894.



While the strategies utilized by the ministry can be effectively evaluated merely from within the organization, a more impartial assessment of relationships that a church has with community dwellers and disciples can be carried out only from the outside. Therefore, there will be two core populations of interest in the present research project: church leaders (n = 3-5) and congregates/disciples (n = 25-27). As for the focus of the study, it will primarily be on the perceptions of respondents in both sample groups of church leadership, discipleship, and outreach practices within the context of evangelism and multiculturalism. The existing practices and models will be compared with the proposed ones and evaluated based on such criteria as their feasibility of implementation and impacts on church growth and quality of relationships with disciples and congregates. In particular, accountability, responsiveness to interests and needs of diverse individuals, mentor availability, informational support, and so forth will be included in the assessment framework as the measures of relationship quality.

#### Limitations

The study will employ the convenience and purposeful sampling techniques. The former will be applied to recruit community and congregation members in the research. At the same time, the latter method will be used to find and select pastors and church leaders who have enough expertise to answer the formulated research questions, as well as willingness to engage in a thorough discussion of issues raised in the present paper. While the researcher will aspire to make the convenience sample representative of the whole community/congregation population by including demographically and multiculturally diverse individuals, an optimal level of generalizability of research findings may still be difficult to attain since the researcher will not have access to reliable and accurate information about socio-demographic characteristics of the selected population as a whole.

At the same time, purposive sampling that implies “the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses” excludes any chance of generalizability<sup>33</sup>. Therefore, inability to generalize research findings may be regarded as the major limitation of the given study. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the purposeful this technique will allow attaining the necessary data saturation within the qualitative study framework as the interviews with recruited experts are intended to be comprehensive and informative. In this way, will help meet the formulated research objectives more efficiently than convenience sampling.

In addition, it is worth mentioning that self-reports that will be used as the primary collection tools in the study are associated with a significant risk of biasing. The subjectivity of respondents’ answers is just one of the factors that may affect the reliability of findings. It is also important to take into account that some participants may be insufficiently motivated to provide thoughtful feedback and invest efforts in the discussion. However, the researcher will attempt to minimize response bias at the stage of obtaining informed consent from study participants by educating them on study objectives and expected manner to answer the research questions.

### **Thesis Statement**

By understanding individuals living in their communities better and adopting church leadership and disciple-making models that are accountable of current social and cultural trends better, churches can ignite the interest of unchurched individuals living in those communities to the Christian teaching easier. Based on this, the broad topic of the present research is church growth and evangelization in the multicultural context. A thesis statement that will be tested in detail within the identified theme is as follows: the application of the

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33. Ilker Etikan, Sulaiman Abubakar Musa and Rukayya Sunusi Alkassim, “Comparison of Convenience Sampling and Purposive Sampling,” *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics* 5, no. 1 (2016): 2.

leadership model that views multicultural competence as one of its core values, incorporates mentorship as a primary tool for disciple-making, and communicates a vision of holistic discipleship as part of community outreach programs can empower disciples to evangelize communities more effectively than conventional leadership and disciple-making practices.

It can be argued that better disciple empowerment can ultimately lead to more sustainable church growth over time. The very term “empowerment” means the sharing of power with others in order to enable them to perform certain activities independently yet effectively. It refers to providing an interested party with access to necessary resources, multilateral support, constructive feedback, and motivation for growth and further involvement in meaningful activities leading to the attainment of desired changes. It is valid to say that throughout history, the empowered discipleship always played a crucial role in the development and success of the church. Thus, by drawing from previous experiences, finding the right approach to multiplying disciples in the present-day context, and encouraging them to fulfill the Great Commission, the contemporary ministry may contribute to the further thriving of the church.

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